



# Self-Directed Supports

## ARE SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORTS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Ask yourself the following questions: Would you like to have more authority to plan your supports based on the lifestyle you choose? Do you want to be more involved in your community and in those activities that interest you? Would you like to hire the staff of your choice and have more say in how your budgeted dollars are spent? If you are saying “yes” to any of these questions, then the Division of Developmental Disabilities in Missouri has a Self Directed Service option for you.

Self-Directed Supports are based upon the principles of Self-determination, which are:

- Freedom to make choices in your life which will impact your life goals and desires.
- Authority to gain control over your life so you are able to choose what makes your life meaningful.
- Support that is natural and offers community experience and opportunities.
- Responsibility to develop your own unique gifts and talents so you have meaningful ways to contribute to your community.
- Confirmation which happens when your community learns to respect you for your abilities and accomplishments.

Self-determination can begin for you when you make the choice to find out what options are available through Self Directed Services.

Services available through the Self-directed supports option can provide you with the opportunity to try new things through a variety of key components which include:

- Developing a Person Centered Plan (PCP) which describes the supports and services you need to be independent in your daily life. You can choose to facilitate the plan yourself, have friends or family facilitate for you, with the help of your Support Coordinator, or hire a Plan Facilitator to develop a plan to fit your needs.
- Support Brokerage offers a trained Support Broker who will work under your direction to assist you with hiring and managing direct care staff, locating resources and community connections and assisting with supports related to your needs.
- Your Individual Budget will be the total dollar value that directly relates to the services and needs as stated in your Person Centered Plan. You exercise control over your own budget and will be responsible for using those dollars wisely to meet your needs.
- Personal Assistants (PA) are those people who you choose to hire to meet your one-on-one support needs during activities of daily living; making sure you are able to access your community as needed to increase independence, productivity and inclusion in your community.
- Financial Management Services are available through Consumer Direct to assist with payroll responsibilities, support you with billing and documentation of financial services as well as tracking and monitoring your individual budget and expenditures. The Consumer Direct website at <http://consumerdirectmo.com/> contains more information about its role.
- Your Back Up Plan will be designed to ensure you are covered in the event that your staff does not show up as scheduled, they leave without notice, or a situation arises which would put you at risk. The Back Up Plan can involve paid and non-paid staff who have stated they will support you should an issue arise.
- Quality Assurance is provided to make certain you are not alone when you decide to self-direct your services and supports. The local Regional Office will continue to assure your health and safety, work with your support circle and responding to problems and concerns to maintain accountability.

## SHARING SUCCESS

Chuck Comstock started asking these questions years ago and made the choice to self-direct his supports as you will see through the personal story he is about to share with you.

*A little over 16 years ago I suffered a spinal cord injury that left me with quadriplegia. After living with my parents in their home for five years, I found myself asking these very questions: What did I want out of life? How could I have more control and be more independent? I just wanted and needed more freedom. Then I heard about self-directed services through the local independent living center and made the choice to self-direct my supports and take charge of my life. That decision changed my life.*

*By self-directing, I am able to completely manage the care I receive. One aspect of this is the hiring and firing of staff. Self-direction allows me to choose who is going to work for me, so I'm not stuck with a personal assistant that just doesn't quite get along with me. Over the past several years I've made a few mistakes with my hiring choices, but luckily, through the self-directed program, I had the authority to replace those people with staff who are much more in tune with who I am. Each of my current staff has worked for me for more than two years and I am very satisfied with all of them.*

*Through self-direction, I also have the opportunity to train my own staff. That way, my care is tailored to my individual needs. For example, I have an accessible van and I've trained a number of staff and friends to operate it in order to get me where I want to go. Each of us has different requirements and should have the right to train our own staff.*

*Another feature of self-directing that I really appreciate is being able to adjust the times of day my staff works. If I need to go shopping at 2 pm on Saturday or go to church at 10 am on Sunday, I can adjust my staff's schedule to match my own. I'm not stuck at home staring at the walls. I can go out and have fun with friends and family when I choose.*



*Thanks to self-directed supports and self-determination, I was able to attend classes on campus at Truman State University and I earned my Bachelor's degree in English in 2006, graduating with a B grade point average. Taking charge of my own life has enabled me to get a good job and be a part of the community where I live. In June 2011, I married my beautiful wife Melissa and we purchased our new home in March 2012. We were blessed in July 2012 and January 2014, with the birth of our daughter's Arianna and Bianca. All my dreams have been fulfilled and I could not ask for a better life. It is a decision I am glad to have made.*



To share the success of other individuals and families,  
visit [www.dmh.mo.gov/dd/spotlight](http://www.dmh.mo.gov/dd/spotlight).



Improving lives THROUGH  
supports and services  
THAT FOSTER self-determination.

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